

6.3 CHECKPOINT - THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

SHORT ESSAY

Choose one of the following prompts to which you will write a short essay:

- 1. Describe the working environment for employees and the condition of factories during the Progressive Era and then explain some of the methods used to improve these situations.**

Working environments today are not the best, but compared to the conditions workers were forced to be in on a daily basis during the Progressive Era, we are very lucky to work in the environments we do today.

In many factories today, our bodies are polluted with many dangerous, cancer causing chemicals and the loud noises are hazardous to hearing, but on top of that, during the Progressive Era, almost everywhere you worked in a factory could get you dangerously ill because of the harsh, disgusting conditions you were forced to operate on a daily basis for most of the day. At an early age, most children were exposed to the working conditions that include modern day problems such as loud noises and dangerous chemicals, as well as packaging tainted meat, handling never washed materials with germs, and like the adults, some children even were in charge of dangerous machinery that one could get caught in. Breathing in all the factory chemicals and components of rat feces caused many workers to become ill and most had to work even when they were ill. Luckily, Theodore Roosevelt noticed this and realized something had to be done about it. In order to improve working conditions, Roosevelt had a protection bill created for consumers and workers describing the regulations that the factories had to meet. This agreement, The Pure Food and Drug Act required the ingredients of every product to be printed on the products packaging so everybody knew what they were really eating. According to the novel "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair, a worker could run his hand across the meat and sweep of a large, extremely unhealthy amount of dried rat droppings. All the droppings would even be ground up in the food without much concern. We may still be forced to endure these conditions today if it weren't for The Pure Drug and Food Act. Eventually, laws were passed protecting children from working in such harsh conditions as well. Many children could live happier and healthier lives if they were allowed out of the factories and could just enjoy being young while they could. It was not good to start a child off in conditions such as the ones present in factories if they were going to live long, healthy lives.